History of

THE FIRST METHODIST CHURCH
of Stafford, Kansas

From It's Beginning to May, 1965

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A most sincere "Thank You" is hereby awarded to Miss Brunetta Jimison, Mrs. Benj. E. Evans, Mrs. Frank Hawver and Mrs. A. L. Soice for their long hours of research and other effort that has made the publication of this history possible.

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In the pioneer days we find that there were many consecrated Christian men and women among the people who settled in and near Stafford. Coming to a new country with only the bare necessities of life, homes to build of sod or materials hauled from a long distance, and a living to wrest from virgin soil, they were very busy people. Yet the Christian people felt the need of worship together and so planned for services. There was no public building in which to hold their meetings, so they met in the homes of Daniel Pound and Caleb Peacock southwest of Stafford (then familiarly known as "Sod-town").

The pioneer fortunate enough to own a good team of horses and a wagon was generous with his less fortunate neighbors, and on Sunday morning stopped at the various homes that he passed and took with him as many as his wagon would hold. Even then many walked across the plains to the church services.

The Pilgrim Fathers found it necessary to carry a gun for protection. It was just as necessary that the early settlers of this part of the country carry their "Snake Sticks" for safety; and it was a common sight to see a number of these "dogwood" sticks lined up along the side of the house where services were being held.

Since chairs were not numerous in pioneer homes, dry goods boxes and sideboards of the lumber wagon, padded with folded comforts, enlarged the seating capacity nicely.

Years later S. S. (Sam) Peacock often told this interesting story of those early days to his children. His daughter, Mrs. Elbert Weir, repeats this story:

"There were no regular ministers for this struggling prairie congregation — but traveling or circuit riding preachers often made extra sacrifices to meet with these earnest Christians.

Having little money, these preachers were entertained in the homes of the members and quite frequently they spent the night at the sod home of Caleb and Phoebe Peacock two and one-half miles southwest of town. When the preacher came, Sam, then a young man, had to sleep on a pallet on the floor—a common custom of the time.

One summer night, Sam woke in a panic as he felt something cold and slimy crawling across his body. Being prairie trained, he froze — holding his breath as the snake slithered across his body. Then he roused his parents. In the darkness, it was dangerous to put a foot on the floor, but a lamp was lighted and the family and the visiting preacher armed themselves and hunted out and killed the deadly rattler. A snake bite in those days was often fatal. There were no hospitals — no modern drugs — and if a doctor was available he was often on a case miles away."

In the spring of 1877, the Methodists banded together, holding their services in the home of Caleb Peacock, two and one-half miles southwest of Stafford. Wm. Wallace and I. L. Ross (local preachers) were in charge of most of these earlier services. A few months later (in the spring of 1878) the organization as a Methodist class was effected by Rev. Schnell.

On April 18th, 1879, a Certificate of Incorporation, as per state law, was issued to this Methodist organization, permitting it to hold property. The first Trustees were: J. B. C. Cook, Wm. Wallace, Chas. W. Cronk, S. Grant, E. B. Crawford, E. Crane and John Self. (At this time Stafford was a part of Pratt County.)

The stock was not to be over $10,000 and the expiration date was to be 100 years, or 1979. On April 22, 1879, it was signed by James Smith, Secretary of State.

The first Methodist services in Stafford were held in Hadlock's Hall. This was above Mr. Hadlock's store, which was located on the west side of Main Street in the block south of Broadway. Mr. Hadlock had, as a part of his merchandise, a stock of caskets which were stored in the back of the hall where church services were held by the Methodists and other church organizations of the town. This undoubtedly added to the solemnity of the services.

Later, services were held in the old frame schoolhouse (the first school building in Stafford), located where the present High School building stands. Services were held in the schoolhouse until a church home was built in 1883. This was a frame building standing on the present church site. We were unable to find the approximate cost of the building, although subscription lists show $1646.00 pledged. This (our first church building) was dedicated October 12th, 1884, by Rev. T. C. Miller, Presiding Elder.

B. E. Evans found the following interesting facts concerning the buying of the lots on which the first church was to be built. E. B. Crawford, president, and R. M. Blair, Secretary, of the Stafford Town Company (city not organized until Sept. 1885) transferred to the following trustees of the Stafford First Methodist Episcopal Church lots 20-21-22 in the Baumgartner Addition, for a consideration of $1.00. The trustees were: Rev. W. W. Wallace, Dr. W. S. Tyrrell, William Horn, Frank Cox and Alva Peacock.

In the winter of 1884, before their own church was built, the Baptist worshipped in the Methodist Church, holding their services on Sunday afternoon.

In March, 1885, Rev. J. F. Clark was appointed at conference to serve the Stafford charge, which was then on a circuit. Previous to this, services in Stafford were conducted by Guy Hamilton, A. C. Taylor, and Rev. Rolingson, who were serving other charges, and also helping keep this young organization going.

In March, 1886, Rev. H. E. Fleming was appointed to Stafford. He had a circuit of five churches. With the aid of missionary money, he was to receive $650.00 salary. On April 19th of this year, work was begun on the parsonage which was built north of the church.

At this time, the Presbyterians were given permission to have the use of the church twice a month, and bear their share of the expense (about 85c a month).

Rev. J. L. Stratford came to us in March, 1887. He was ill for some time and had to leave the charge in October of that year. Rev. G. W. Akers supplied for him during his illness and until Rev. C. H. McMillan was appointed in December to finish out the year.

The Christian Church was organized in March 1887, and held their services in the Methodist Church on Sunday afternoons, until the late winter or early Spring of 1888.

From March, 1888, until December, 1897, the following pastors served the Stafford charge: Jeffery Martin, S. S. Sulliger, J. N. Howard, J. W. Pruen, and H. E. Swan.

On April 16, 1889, while S. S. Sulliger was our pastor, lightning struck the steeple of the church causing about $200.00 damage to the building.

About this time an event took place which caused considerable dissension in the congregation. The barker of a Medicine Show came to town and contacted the Board of Trustees. Usually these shows were held on street corners, but for some reason (probably weather conditions) he asked to rent the church. The trustees rented the church to him. In a few nights the show became exceedingly popular. Young and old rushed to attend the free performance, and of course bought the medicine. Many members thought the "carryings-on" at the church were disgraceful—for some of the songs, jokes and dances were "off color" for that time,—the mid nineties. Finally, opposition became so strong the Medicine show's contract was broken, and the so-called Doctor was asked to leave town — much to the chagrin of the younger crowd.

In December, 1897, W. M. Runyan came as our pastor working with us until March 1900. (For several years after 1903, he did evangelistic work, and having a talent for music, has written, composed and published a number of sacred songs and tunes since then.

J. L. Patterson was our pastor for the two years following. In March, 1902, Rev. Geo. H. Parkinson was appointed to Stafford. He was in an eastern school and Rev. J. A. Anderson supplied the pulpit for him until the close of the school year. In June he came to Stafford, bringing with him his bride (the former Ora Pollard of Sterling). An opportunity came for him to take up

student pastoral work, while he continued his studies in Evanston, Illinois. So in September, 1903, he was released to go to this work.

In October, 1903, Rev. E. N. Cunningham became our pastor, remaining with us until March, 1906. By this time the old frame church had become inadequate for the needs of the larger congregation, and a movement was started to build a new church. In October, 1904, it was reported that $6700.00 had been raised in twenty-four hour's time toward the building of the church.

The next spring the frame church was moved to one side far enough to permit the building of the new church while using the old one for services. After the new building was completed, the old one was sold.

The afternoon of October 15, 1905, was a happy one when Rev. Thomas Corwin Iliff, of the Methodist Episcopal Board of Church Extension, dedicated the fine new brick building which was to be our church home for several years. Rev. W. J. Martindale, our Presiding Elder was with us and assisted in the services. The cost of the building was about $9,000.00.

In the early days, travel was by horse and buggy or wagon and team. So we find among old records where contracts were made for the erection of hitching posts on the church lots for the convenience of those attending services in our first two church buildings.

For most of the years since the organization of the church, Eureka was on the charge with Stafford. At Conference, March, 1906, they were placed on a circuit with Union Center, and since that time Stafford has been a separate charge (as has Eureka for several years now).

Rev. R. L. George became our pastor at the next conference. It is interesting to note that at the end of the first quarter, Mrs. George reported 102 members in the Junior League, and they used the regular studies for the four grades. The average attendance was fifty. As the services were held on Sunday afternoon, number of her members were from the other churches, who did not have such a Junior organization.

(Collected from old sources written by Mrs. Emma Rasmussen, E. A. Briles of The Courier, old documents, county files—personal stories of Mrs. Lucy Jenkins, Mrs. Marie Weir and others.

Brunetta Jimison, May, 1965)

Rev. George was followed by Rev. A. E. Kirk, Rev. L. G. Mulhollen, and Rev. L. R. Hoff. Rev. Hoff remained with us about seven months. He desired to become a minister in the Holiness Church, and was released to take up his work with that church.

E. F. Buck 1912 - 1916

It was during Rev. Buck's pastorate that a new parsonage was completed east of the church. It was a two-story building, now moved to West Broadway, just east of the Missouri Pacific crossing. The approximate cost of the parsonage was $3100. Much labor was donated by men of the congregation.

By 1915, the church was becoming crowded, so the Men's Bible Class had to find a place to meet. A few years later, a small frame building was built north of the church, costing about $650. The Sunday School Primary Department and the Junior League were moved into the new building thus relieving the congestion in the main church.

Many records have been lost—evidently in one of the moves. According to records of the Ladies' Aid, it was during the period 1918 - 1924 when it was discovered that the walls of the church were badly cracked. Contractors advised against attempting to remodel, so tentative plans for a new building got under way.

J. C. Fisher 1916 - 1918

This was during World War I, and the minister and his wife were busy with community affairs, as well as those of the church. The Fishers had both been missionaries in India, and had traveled extensively. They had collected many interesting articles and were glad to show them to friends.

A. H. Ponath 1918 - 1919

In the fall of 1918, churches and all meeting places were closed for a number weeks, because of the great influenza epidemic. A union revival with the United Presbyterians was planned for this time. The services were to be conducted by Rev. and Mrs. Flower, but the union service idea was given up and Rev. and Mrs. Flower left to take up the work as evangelists elsewhere. Service had been missed, as the increased attendance proved after the churches were opened once more.

Guy E: Spear 1919 - 1924

The Spears had several small children and often when Mrs. Spear could not be in church, Mr. Spear seated the children near the front where he could keep an eye on them. The second girl was unusually active. One morning she was more disturbing than usual. Rev. Spear stopped in the midst of his sermon, and said more sadly than sternly, "Daughter, how can daddy think what he is saying when you are so naughty?" Once he even brought her up and made her sit in a chair near him.

New Church Planned

As peace came to the nation, church building plans were brought out again and by 1923 the congregation was ready to take steps. A whole chapter might be written on the planning, building, dedication and final payment of our present church. The depression hit before all pledges could be met. After that, money was so scarce that the members of the church did well to pay the minister and keep the church open.

By June, 24, 1923, feeling was so strong for the building of the new church that the Official Board elected the following building committee: H. L. McCurdy, F. G. Smart, and George Dale. These men and others who served on various committees, spent much time studying structure-design and materials before choosing a plan. They visited many new churches but according to B. E. Evans, they chose as their plan, one based on the Riverside Christian Church at Wichita. This church had recently been completed. These men, of course, took much criticism because it was impossible to please the entire congregation. Shuler and Company, architects, of Wichita, worked closely with the committee, giving suggestions and advice on many points.

Don Shuler of the Shuler Co. came to Stafford and helped make the final plans. Total subscriptions at this time were $18,940.

A. N. Smith 1924 - 1927

The change of pastors did not lessen the building zeal. Rev.

and Mrs. Smith threw themselves whole--heartedly into the work. They offered advice when asked, helped to raise funds, and did all they could to push forward the building plans. Mrs. Smith was active in the church organizations and was one of the original mincemeat ladies.

Rev. Smith had served as a Chaplain in World War I, and one of the Smith's children had died while he was in Europe. The Smiths had one older son, Warren, not at home, Paul in high school and Dorothy several years younger.

Feb. 16, 1925, Ed Heimiller was hired as Superintendent of wrecking the old church. Also, he was to move the primary building. He was to be paid 75c an hour and his helpers 30c an hour. Mrs. Joe Spickard and Mrs. H. L. McCurdy were to oversee the storing of all church furniture, etc. W. L. Taylor was hired to build the church. Finally, after years of planning, things were moving.

H. L. McCurdy Lumber Co. was appointed as purchasing agent for the Building Committee. He was to receive approximately one-half the regular commission, or 10 per cent on materials handled through his yard. Mr. McCurdy was to order other materials his yard did not handle, such as steel, brick and sand, free of charge.

By July, 1925, the following contracts had been let: Joe Dale electrical contract—he was to receive $1.00 per hour and his helpers 75c. The Stafford Plumbing Company was awarded the contract for plumbing with regular wages and helpers at 75c an hour. The committee had long, tiresome meetings during this time, making decisions and dealing with heating, roofing and glass companies.

The cornerstone of today's church was laid Sept. 6, 1925, with Rev. A. E. Kirk, a former pastor of the church, and at the time President of Southwestern College, and C. M. Gray, District Superintendent, in charge of the services.

When the old building was torn down, the congregation used the High School Building for services. But when the basement was completed in the fall of 1926, it was immediately put into use.

New Church Dedicated

Our present building was dedicated May 22, 1927 by Bishop Ernest Lynn Waldorf. Its cost was approximately $30,000. The pipe organ was not installed until later, and was dedicated May 10, 1931, by District Superintendent J. W. Abel.

The first mortgage was for $30,000 and was dated Aug. 27, 1927. It was reduced to $20,000 by Oct. 1931. Failure to make payments after that date increased the indebtedness to $23,407 by October 1935. At that time, $743.00 remaining unpaid on the pipe organ was added and a new mortgage negotiated for $24,150. During the first seven years after the dedication the ladies of the church paid $9,043 on the debt.

C. F. Hestwood 1927 - 1928

Rev. Hestwood started his work off with much zeal. But he became ill in the summer of 1928, and was taken to Wichita for an operation. Complications set in and he did not recover. His funeral was held in the church with J. W. Abel in charge. He was assisted by W. W. Owen of Halstead, W. F. Danner of Hutchinson, C. E. Williams of Kingman, F. D. Womeldorf of Kingman and Otto T. Wolkman of Valley Center. The choir was made up of sixty of his minister friends. Ministers and friends from all over

the state were present. Services were carried out as much as possible as Mr. Hestwood had wished.

T. F. Rudisill, Supply 1928

T. F. Rudisill of the Eureka Church supplied the Stafford church until the next conference and worked valiantly to fulfill his service to both churches.

E. M. Fly 1928 - 1931

Mr. and Mrs. Fly had one son, Elbert, who was graduated from Stafford High School. He is now Instructor of Music in the Topeka schools, and also director of the First Methodist Church choir there. Mr. Fly worked hard to get new blood into some of the organizations that needed change.

W. W. Owen 1931 - 1934

Rev. Owen came in the early days of the depression when banks were closing and dust storms swept across the plains. The Owens had two small children— a boy, and a girl named Juanita who often sang for church programs. She had a sweet, clear, strong, voice for a child.

In 1932, by Aug. 1, only one-half of the budget had been subscribed. People hesitated to make promises they might not be able to fulfill.

Mr. Owen suggested a plan to help raise interest money—which was carried out. He also asked to have a minister exchange for the spring revival, and to ask the services of Miss May Faulkner. Miss Faulkner, a deaconess, did notable work with the children.

All accounts of the church organizations were combined into one fund under one Treasurer. Russell Hibbs was appointed as Treasurer.

Mr. and Mrs. Owen now live in Wichita (1965).

R. L. George 1934 - 1938

Rev. George came back for his second ministry with the Stafford church after almost thirty years. After the death of his first wife, he had married Bernice Pafford, who, for a number of years had taught music in the Stafford High School. Much work was being done to make payments on the mortgage but little progress could be made. Special collections were made for new hymnals during January and February 1938—$153.00 was raised.

A Junior Choir was started by Mrs. O. W. Longwood during this time.

Mrs. George was quite active in all phases of church work.

R. F. Morgan 1938 - 1940

One of the congregation stated that Rev. Morgan was sent to Stafford to help pay off the church debt, but times were still difficult. There were 451 on the church roll at this time—and the re-organization of the M. E. Church was completed in 1940.

Rev. Morgan took the Junior League delegates to the Institute in Salina. This was the first time for our intermediates—and they were thrilled! Especially because Rev. Morgan drove so fast. Mr. Morgan is not now living, but Mrs. Morgan is living in the Methodist Home in Topeka (1965).

H. P. Woertendyke 1940 - 1945

The family in the parsonage was active in church, school and community. One son, Ralph, was in high school, but the Woertendykes also had a son and daughter who were married.

Again, it was war time. Many from our church were in service. A plan to keep the church in the minds of our men and women who were away fighting was started. Members were given addresses and a constant stream of letters went out to all parts of the world.

The Woertendykes organized the first Menninger Bible Classes in Stafford. Afternoon classes met in the church and were taught by the pastor's wife and he taught the evening class. At present (1965) though retired from active ministry, they are still teaching Menninger classes at Garden City, Kansas. Rev. Woertendyke died September 1965.

A Red Cross class met regularly in one of the class rooms and was taught by Dr. J. J. Tretbar.

Period of Indebtedness

From 1935 to 1940 interest payments were made and $2000 paid on the principal. In November of 1940 arrangements were made with the holder of the mortgage to amortize the loan on a monthly payment of interest and a small amount on the principal. The "Build the Other Half" program was instituted and had brought in about $1900. The W.S.C.S. paid $1240, and the budget provided $800 during this period.

The final payment on the debt was $18,237.58, of which $18,200 was in war bonds. Payment at this time saved about $6,890 in interest which would have been paid if the monthly amortization plan had been continued. The contributions made by church members and others in the recent campaign had provided about $2000 extra which was used for repairs and improvements.

But the thirteen years from 1931 until the mortgage burning were trying ones. Money was scarce, crops were bad and to keep up running expenses, pay interest and the pastor, sometimes seemed impossible. At times bills piled up, for example the electric bill. The city had been patient but they were pressing for at least a token payment. Mr. F. G. Smart, as financial secretary, told the following story: The Official Board was troubled. They had prayed collectively and individually, but had helped all they could personally.

One evening on the way to a meeting of the Official Board Mr. Smart stopped by the Postoffice and found an envelope with a check that made a substantial payment on the bill and kept the lights on.

Many years later, he talked to the writer of that check and she confessed that she had not wanted to send it. She was so short of money, but her conscience kept nagging at her until finally she hastily stuffed the check in an envelope and sent it off before she could change her mind. Mr. Smart's son, Arville, standing by, remarked: "That's Dad's favorite story of the power of prayer."

Doubtless there were many such untold stories of those difficult times. During this period all the pastors who served here, although handicapped by the lack of money, tried to help ease the

financial load by personal sacrifices and willingness to help in various ways.

The Boy Scouts met in the church two hours weekly.

In spite of the troubled times the church carried on, looking toward the day when the mortgage could be paid. Crops were better, war work was bringing in ready cash and the congregation looked forward eagerly to wiping out the church debt.

Mortgage Burning

On Feb. 27, 1944, the long awaited day arrived. After a 12:30 dinner for the congregation the following mortgage burning ceremony was held.

2:00 AFTERNOON SERVICE. S. F. Peacock, Chairman Official Board, Presiding:

Prelude, "The Church's One Foundation" — Lee Rogers
Anthem — Junior Choir, "Others" — Arthur A. Penn
Scripture Lesson: Psalms 19.
Prayer
Anthem, "Break Forth Into Joy" — Simper
Soprano Solo, Miss Gloria Soice
Greetings from Former Pastors
Mixed Quartet, "My Faith in Thee" — O'Hara
Mrs. Wright Taylor, Mrs. Jack Warnock, Walter Ewy, D. D. Drews
Presentation of Mortgage, A. L. Soice, Chairman Board of Trustees
The Burning Ceremony
Doxology
Closing Message — Dr. Mulvaney
Hymn No. 255—"True Hearted, Whole Hearted"
Benediction
Postlude, "We Give Thee Thanks" — M. F. Lawrence

One interesting feature of the afternoon was the participation of Mrs. Mary Crawford, then 95 years of age, the only living charter member of the church.

Arlon Ebright 1945 - 1948

Rev. Ebright came to the church from the Methodist Church at Ellinwood. He was well known over the conference for his work with the youth. Rev. Ebright came from a long line of active ministers, and had served during the war with the Navy. Most of his service was in Texas. His discharge came shortly after he came to Stafford. The Ebrights had three small children, a son, Arlon, a daughter, Marcia Ann, and a baby daughter, Dorothy, who was born here. Rev. Ebright died at Hays, Kansas, October, 1965. He was at the time, Superintendent of the Hays Conference.

Clyde Brewster 1948 - 1952

The Brewsters served the church four years and were sent from here to the larger pastorate at Hays. They had two children, Richard and Betty, who were both in college while their parents served here. They had served as missionaries in Peru for many years.

Rev. Brewster used a more formal service than previous ministers. The robed choir used the processional and recessional to help the audience enter into spirit of the service.

Glenn Palmer 1952 - 1955

The Palmers had one son, Warren, who was in Kansas State University.

Rev. Palmer was also active in other phases of community work and served as an active member of the Library Board. He was much disappointed, when because of illness, he could not help in the Dedication of the new balcony at the Library as he had planned. Mr. Palmer died in 1964.

R. P. Crawford 1955 - 1958

Rev. Crawford came to Stafford after eight highly successful years in the Great Bend church. Many improvements were made during his pastorate. The dining room was tiled and redecorated, a complete new heating and air-conditioning unit was installed at the approximate cost of $13,000 — the church sanctuary and foyer were re-decorated, and the lot north of the church was graded and graveled for parking. New hymnals were placed in the sanctuary, new folding chairs were purchased, and a new refrigerated drinking fountain was installed. Also an A.B. Dick mimeograph and cabinet were purchased for the church office.

Rev. Crawford retired June 1, 1958 and moved to Wichita to become Associate Pastor at Trinity Methodist Church.

Gilbert Peters 1958 - 1962

Rev. Peters came to Stafford from Lincoln, Kansas. There were four children in the family: Jean, who graduated from Stafford High School and went on to Kansas Wesleyan at Salina. She is now doing Missionary work in Liberia, West Africa, and was assigned from the Concordia District; Paul and Mark are in school at Kansas Wesleyan, and Elaine is a Senior at Smith Center (1965).

The carpeting for the sanctuary was laid while Rev. Peters was serving here.

Cautious Choate 1962 - 1965

Dr. Cautious A. Choate and Mrs. Ruth Choate came to the Stafford Church June 1962 from the Trinity Methodist Church in Wichita. Rev. and Mrs. Choate have two grown children, a son, C. Arthur Choate Jr., and daughter Phyllis. Arthur and his wife Mary are the parents of three children, Lisa Suzanna, Laura, and Paul Arthur. Arthur is an Instructor in Psychiatric Social Work in Columbia, Missouri. Phyllis is the wife of Rev. R. Bruce Southard, pastor of the Methodist Church in Burns, Kansas. The Southards are the parents of two small daughters, Suzanna Weslie and Melody Lynn. Both families have visited their parents and grandparents in their parsonage home in Stafford.

Dr. Choate is Chairman of the Interboard Council, is on the Southwestern College Board of Trustees, and Chairman of Personnel Committee of Southwestern College, a member of the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee of Philander-Smith College, Fort Smith, Ark. He is also on the Board of Directors of the Kansas Council of Churches.

Under the heading "Other Ministries" on a conference report, Rev. Choate stated, "Probably the closest to this category I have come is the fact that I have been faithful in attendance at Wednesday coffees downtown and Chamber of Commerce meetings, and a service club, Rotary... If the price of coffee goes up, I can give you one good reason for the rise."

The preaching schedule at Stafford and Eureka being as it is, has kept the pastor busy at the Sunday School hour and he has not

been able to participate in the Sunday School program as he might have liked. However, he has kept in touch with the Youth by helping in the Senior MYF when he could, with his preparatory classes and helping the Girl Scouts with their God and Community Award program, and the Boy Scouts with their God and Country Award program. Mrs. Choate has been sponsor of the Junior High group in their active program of study, and also has chaperoned many lively times, such as Hayrack Rides and Wiener Roasts and Watermelon Feeds. Adult sponsors help them with suggestions and guidance.

Church Progress and Improvement

Much improvement of the church plant has been accomplished during these three years. During the year 1963 the church building was cleaned by the process of re-mortaring and sanding of the stone work. Since CHECK program was retired that year, it was hoped this would make it possible to pay for the cleaning project. The annual Every Member Visitation dinner was held amid the dust of re-sanding the church, but the spirit of the meeting was fine and plans were made for 1964-65 in spite of the dust. Trees that had fallen prey to the elm beetle and other decrepitudes of age, were removed and two new Pine Oaks were planted later. The old sidewalks in front of the church were removed and new ones put in. Work was done by members of the Methodist Men who have done much of the work of improving our church this year.

The September, 1963, Messenger stated how wonderful it was to have the choir back with an anthem after summer vacation. Dr. Brown and Mr. and Mrs. Whaley of the schools here in Stafford will lead the choir again this year. Our Youth and Children's Choirs are in capable hands. We are thankful for this part of our worship services. Larry Hartsell and Dale McCune gave Mrs. Warnock a vacation at the organ during the summer. We are always thankful that our music program is in capable hands, and we do appreciate the special number given by our choir under Dr. Brown's leadership.

1964 — 1965

Our church joined with three other churches of the community in a Community Breakfast held at 6:30. This usually falls on the second Tuesday of each month at one of the churches. Each church takes a turn at being the hostess church. These breakfasts originated during the Dr. Roy L. Smith meetings of 1961.

Our church joined with the other churches of the community in opposing the proposal for the establishing of a liquor store in the city of Stafford. Women of all ten churches in the community conducted a prayer vigil during the voting hours on April 16th, between the hours of 8:00 and 6:00 p.m. Men of the church spoke out against the liquor interests, and the result of the vote was two to one against the establishment of the store in Stafford.

During these three years we were privileged to have three outstanding evangelistic meetings led by Rev. Pegura of Argentina and in 1964 Dr. Charles W. Koller of Chicago, Ill., with Mr. and Mrs. Harold Hasse in charge of Music.

In March 1965, Dr. C. Ralston Smith, outstanding Presbyterian Pastor, Traveler, and Conference Speaker held a week of meetings in the High School Auditorium. Dr. Smith spoke in our church at the Spiritual Life Breakfast March 23, 1965.

A statement was made at the Quarterly Conference that the church is now in the best condition it has ever been. The church itself has had many improvements—the finances have been met with the least effort, all records are up to date and there is a most harmonious feeling among the members, all of which has been brought about by the splendid leadership of the pastor and his wife.

Reverend Choate resigned from the Conference after 45 years. Rev. and Mrs. Choate will serve churches in Alaska Mission from August 22 to October 31, at Nome, Alaska and Kenai which is southwest of Anchorage. In November they will return to their home at 526 North Poplar, Wichita, Kansas.

A basket dinner by all members of the church was held May 16th after the morning services honoring the pastor and Mrs. Choate.

Brunetta Jimison and Mrs. A. L. Soice, May 1965

Stafford Methodist Ministers

Previous to 1885, the supply ministers were: Wm. Wallace, local preacher, I. L. Ross, local preacher, Rev. Schnell, Guy Hamilton, A. C. Taylor, Rev. Rolingson.

J. F. . Clark, 1885-1886
H. E. Fleming, 1886-1887
J. L. Stratford, 1887
G. W. Akers, supply 1887
C. H. McMillan, 1887-1888
Jeffery Martin, 1888
S. S. Sulliger, 1888-1891
J. N. Howard, 1891-1892
J. W. Pruen, 1892-1894
H. E. Swan, 1894-1897
W. M. Runyan, 1897-1900
J. L. Patterson, 1900-1902
J. A. Anderson, supply 1902
G. H. Parkinson, 1902-1903
E. N. Cuninngham, 1903-1906
R. L. George, 1906-1907
A. E. Kirk, 1907-1909
L. F. Mulhollen, 1909-1913
L. R. Hoff, 1913
E. F. Buck, 1913-1916
J. C. Fisher, 1916-1918
A. H. Ponath, 1918-1919
Guy E. Spear, 1919-1924
A. N. Smith, 1924-1927
C. D. Hestwood, 1927-1928
T. F. Rudisill, supply 1928
E. M. Fly, 1928-1931
W. W. Owen, 1931-1934
R. L. George 1934-1938
R. F. Morgan, 1938-1940
H. P. Woertendyke, 1940-1945
Arlon Ebright, 1945-1948
Clyde Brewster, 1948-1952
Glenn Palmer, 1952-1955
R. P. Crawford, 1955-1958
Gilbert Peters, 1958-1962
Cautious A. Choate, 1962-1965
H. J. Sterling, 1965
WAYNE KENYON 1968

Sunday School

In the winter of 1879, A Union Sunday school was organized and met in a little sod school-house called Pleasant Valley. Once in awhile they had church services—when a minister was available.

Fuel was scarce and each Sunday someone was appointed to feed the corn stalks into the stove. It must have been a good corn year—for many years there would have been no stalks big enough to burn. Then they resorted to "prairie coal" or dried buffalo dung. But when cornstalks were available, they made a quick, hot fire if the stoker stayed on the job.

We are quite sure there was a form of Sunday School after the Methodists moved into town for services but the official organization came in 1884 according to the records of the M. E. Historical Society at Southwestern College. This was when the congregation moved into their own new church. At that time there were 112 church members and 99 enrolled in Sunday School; by

1899 some of the new seemed to have worn off, for although there were 200 church members, only 50 were enrolled in Sunday School.

Space will not permit enrollment for each year. In truth, records are not available; by February 1938 there were 37 officers and teachers in the Sunday School, 248 of all grades, 19 in the Home Department and 21 children on the nursery roll. Counting teachers and officers there was a total of 325. October 1, 1944 the active enrollment was 235, officers and teachers 30, total attendance for the year 9401. That year the Sunday School paid $100 on the church debt.

May, 1965, Marion Hearn, Sunday School Superintendent reports 196 enrolled, 155 average attendance and average collection $19.50.

By May, 1919, a strong Men's Bible Class was meeting in the High School Building. On April 16, 1919, Mrs. J. L. Spickard, teacher of the Ladies Class brought her class to visit the Men's Class; that day there were 23 present. On May 18th of that year the attendance was 42.

In August 1919, a contest was started with the St. John's Men's Bible Class. After the specified time the attendance winners were to be entertained by the losers. Mrs. Lucy Jenkins, speaking of her husband remarked, "Will was much interested—and never missed a Sunday. Excitement and interest ran high but after the contest was over, he, like many others lost interest." But Stafford won.

Later the Men's Class and the Ladies Class united to form the popular 50-50 Class.

There have been many dedicated workers in the Sunday School and still are. But two names are usually mentioned when speaking of those who have given so much time and energy to this service. Mrs. Hulda Gerdes of the Primary Department and Bob Everett, teacher of the older boys. When Mrs. Gerdes was honored in 1952 for her thirty years work with the little people, many men and women attended who had been in her classes. It was war time, Korean, and one soldier present, Howard Soice was happy to be there to thank her for her work.

The late Bob Everett (1965) worked with the boys for years. While they were away in school or service, he kept in touch with letters, pictures, clippings and often little gifts. But he never forgot one of his "boys" even when they grew into late middle age; he always had an active interest in all they did.

A constant effort is made to make the Sunday School rooms attractive, to furnish needed equipment and to interest vital teachers. The special program given by the children is always a high light of the year. The children feel needed and wanted in the church—and this is as it should be—for they will be the future workers and leaders in the church. Each year a church school is held in June for the lower grades—and the attendance is usually high—sometimes almost 100—varying from year to year.

Brunetta Jimison, May, 1965.

Epworth League

We have no record of the first organization of the Stafford Epworth League—only a slight reference in a written article which says—"the local Epworth League is only two years younger than that of the Mother League." According to the Encyclopedia, that

was in 1889—thus the Stafford League would have started work in 1891.

The purpose and aims of the League were mainly four—spirtual, missionary, social service and recreation. No records are extant but through the years the League worked hard in all fields. There were many workers in the field but the name of Hazel Akers stands out. She practically dedicated her life to the young people of the church until about 1930.

The League did many things; religious booths at the State Fair, collection of canned goods and non-perishable food to be sent to institutions, collecting old clothes and numerous other things.

The members had good times also. In the late twenties an event happened that shows how ideas and times have changed. Mrs. Burdean Soice tells this story. Then Burdean Falen, now of Wichita, she was acting as entertainment chairman. Having attended several play parties, she thought to spur lagging interest, the League would give such a party. They invited guests, young people from other groups; the interest proved so great they decided to have the party in the church basement. Just when the party was at its noisy height, the pastor at the time rushed into the room. He was very angry and accused them of desecrating the House of God, and ordered them out at once. He would not allow them to serve their refreshments and even turned out the lights to hurry their departure.

In 1940, the re-organized Methodist Church changed the name of Young Peoples Society to Methodist Youth Fellowship, but the work goes on much the same. Mrs. Earl Hayes has spent many years with the MYF and has gained much attention through the work of her group presenting religious dramas. Groups trained by her have received high commendations for their plays which they have presented not only locally, but to many church groups in other towns and cities of the Conference.

Other dedicated workers in recent years are Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Gee and Mr. and Mrs. Leland Sloan.

Members of the Stafford MYF have held offices in the District Organization and are a live wire group.

Brunetta Jimison, May, 1965

The Book of Remembrance

The title of the book "The Book of Remembrance" indicates its purpose. It is designed to be a book of remembrance. This book will be in the Pastor's Study at all times.

First Methodist Church, Stafford, Kansas, desires to remember the gifts and deeds of its members and friends as they are expressed in donations for material improvement and beautification of its properties.

(a) In some instances, gifts have been made as specific memorials to loved ones;

(b) In other instances, individuals have made presentations because of a sense of the need, or simply out of love for the church;

(c) Still others prefer that the "left hand not know what the right hand doeth", and have given anonymously.

Regardless of the type of the gift, the church desires that, where violence is not done to the wish of the donor, some record

of major gifts be kept. It only regrets that the practice was not begun earlier and the origin of some significant gifts may have been forgotten. For this fact, apologies are due and are hereby made.

The church realizes, furthermore, that many persons contribute equal or larger sums of money, with equivalent or greater sacrifice, to the program of the church. These gifts are equally appreciated, although, obviously, they are more difficult to record and remember.

Thanks are hereby given to all those who have expressed their love to the church through the sharing of their resources.

I. Memorial Gifts

Furnishings for pastor's study — J. T. Lear and T. C. Reid families in memory of Mr. and Mrs. E. B. Lear.

Piano in Sanctuary —family of Mr. and Mrs. Lee Porter. 1962

Altar Set — family of J. A. Falen

Altar Set — Mrs. Cora Crawford

Folders for choir music — family of Gladys Harrison. 1955

Furnishings in MYF room — Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Peacock, in memory of son Sam Peacock. 1949

Outdoor Bulletin Board — Gladys Peacock, in memory of husband Floyd Peacock. 1960

Red Altar Cloths (Paraments) — Mr. and Mrs. Paul Whitsell in memory of daughter Betty.

Baby-grand piano in 50-50 Room — Mr. and Mrs. Keith Johnson in memory of daughter Marilyn.

Picture in Foyer (east) — Church, in memory of Owen Hawver, son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Hawver, World War II casualty.

Picture in Foyer (west) — Church, in memory of Dale McCune, son of Mrs. Carl McCune, World War II casualty.

Picture in Junior Department Room — in memory of Bob Everett. 1963

Carillon Bells — Mrs. Hughes, in memory of husband Charles Delmer, and daughters Mary Elizabeth Hughes, and Olga Russell. 1947

Silver Tea Service — family of Ida Hagenmaster. 1946

Set of Altar Cloths (Paraments) — Gertrude Piepmeier in memory of husband Milton Piepmeier. 1964

Hand Rails at rear door of church — Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Garey, in memory of their parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Garey, and Mr. and Mrs. Harve Crawford. 1965

Drinking Fountain in basement — Stanfield Tretbar, in memory of uncle, Dr. F. W. Tretbar. 1958

Remodeling of Secretary's Room — inspired by gift from Mrs. Gladys Byer in honor of daughter Hattie, and completed by W.S.C.S. 1964-65.

Folding tables in Fellowship Hall — Mabel Butler, in memory of her mother, Mrs. Josephine Newbill. 1957

Portable Communion Set — Ina Hawver, in memory of son Owen. 1963

II. Love Gifts

Cross above choir — Rev. A. O. Ebright

Prie Dieu — Mr. and Mrs. James Johnson. 1963

Surplice collars for choir robes — Mrs. W. F. Sandifer.

Mimeograph Machine — Mrs. Carl McCune, Mr. and Mrs. Eldwyn McCune, Mr. and Mrs. Boyd McCune. 1962

Electric cook unit in kitchen — Gladys Tretbar, Pearl Brown, I. N. Giles. 1964

Brass railings in foyer — Mr. and Mrs. Harold Jenkins. 1960

Memorial Book — Dr. and Mrs. O. W. Longwood. 1964

Mirror in Foyer — Mr. and Mrs. Irvin Teichman. 1965

Flags in Sanctuary — W.S.C.S. Circle (Mabel Butler, circle leader).

Four flower stands by Chancel — made and given by Reuben Bowman. 1965

Guest Book Desk in foyer — made and given by Reuben Bowman. 1965

Record Player (console) — given to M.Y.F. by Gladys Peacock. 1965

Pulpit Light — Mr. and Mrs. Harold Jenkins. 1961

Metal filing cabinet — Mr. and Mrs. Dick Darnall. 1962

Organ Light — Dr. and Mrs. O. W. Longwood 1947

Row of Arbor Vita trees — Mrs. Elsa Tretbar

Children's Nursery — Mr. and Mrs. Milton Piepmeier, and Elbert Weir.

Carpeting for Sanctuary — W.S.C.S. and many donors (33 altogether). Mrs. O. W. Longwood, President of W.S.C.S. 1961

Early plantings for church grounds — Dr. and Mrs. J. G. Tretbar

Picture in ladies Parlor — Dr. Paul Harrison. 1955

Illuminated picture in Ladies Parlor — Service Class. 1955

Fluorescent light in M.Y.F. Room — Mr. and Mrs. Louis Thole, Mr. and Mrs. Francis Kates. 1965

Light over Secretary's Desk — Leona Masten. 1964

Front Porch Lights — Mr. and Mrs. Fred Paulsen. 1965

W.S.C.S. Library and File — W.S.C.S. 1965

Four table - chair trucks — Jerry Gee, Harvey Crabb, George Irvine, O. W. Longwood.

Long mirror in choir room — Reuben Bowman. 1965

Painting of 50-50 Room (first time) — Zelma Bieber

Desk and chair in Ladies Parlor — Mrs. Frank Hawver. 1961

Light on west side of church — Kate Paulsen, Roy Russell, O. W. Longwood, J. J. Tretbar, Lee Soice, W. F. Sandifer. 1959

Baptismal Bowl — Mr. and Mrs. Alton Dale. 1946

Collection Plates — Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Dale. 1943

Piano in Sanctuary — Mr. and Mrs. Roy Russell

Chair by organ — Mrs. Elmer Dale and children. 1950

Picture (head of Jesus) — Charlotte Dale Heide

Clock in Fellowship Hall — Mr. and Mrs. Walter Koontz. 1965

III. Anonymous Gifts

New Refrigerator 1964

Outside landscaping

Two Coffee Makers for kitchen. 1964

Four small bulletin boards 1965

Donations and gifts for repair of Fellowship Hall: Celotex ceiling, mahogany paneling on north wall. 1965

Donation to repair church roof. 1965

Stafford Methodist Ladies Aid

The Ladies' Aid Society was evidently organized and went to work in the very early days of the church. Mrs. Lucy Jenkins recalls hearing her mother talk about going to the Aid Society. Little Lucy always thought her mother said she was going to the "Egg" Society.

Our first authentic record of the Society is contained in the Secretary's book of 1903-1912. The first meeting was held at the home of Mrs. J. B. C. Cook on July 9, 1903. The Society had recently been re-organized, new by-laws written, and they were approved and accepted at this meeting. Mrs. Matthias was President, and Mrs. Lillian Griffith was Secretary.

As usual, they were involved in making money, and planning what they could do to help raise money for the new church then in the planning stage—and which was completed and dedicated in 1905.

The product they were pushing then and until 1911 was "Stain-Off." Evidently this was for pots and pans, and must have been a good product because it had such a steady sale for the next eight years. At this first meeting the agent, a Mrs. Carver, turned in $6.95, the society's commission on previous sales. The ladies voted to make another order, and also put the product on sale at the Baugh Drug Store and advertise it in the local paper.

The Society operated successfully the first year, and went into 1904 with Mrs. Magill as President. Mrs. A. B. Akers as Vice-President, Mrs. Elizabeth Floto as Secretary and Mrs. H. L. McCurdy as Treasurer.

From 1903, we have records that showed the Aid has always been a strong support for the Church, and a pleasant fellowship for the Methodist women of Stafford.

The first existing Secretary's book covers the period from July, 1903 to October, 1912, and has a complete record of the work being done. The Society pledged $1000 to the church fund, and raised $333.35 the first year the pledge was made. The Aid did many other things also. The Ladies built a new porch for the parsonage bought new carpeting for the parsonage—in fact all the necessary repairs, such as screen doors, wallpaper etc. They also bought blinds for the church at a cost of $71.22, and each year the Aid made pledges to the church budget—averaging $100 to $150.

The Ladies also sold magazine subscriptions to Woman's Home Companion, shaving soap, toilet soap, flower seeds and a dozen other articles. It was about 1907 when they published the first Methodist Cook Book. It was a good, practical book, and was used for many years. No proof of the number printed or sold can be found, but during the meeting of April 9, 1908 the Society voted to order another 100 books. The price of the Cook Book must have been fifty cents, judging from the amounts turned in for 6 books, total $3.00. At this meeting the Aid voted to pay $25 on the Minister's salary. The church budget must have been empty.

It is interesting to note that during this period covered by the first book, certain names occur frequently—Akers, Mary Crawford,

Matthias, Peacock, Larabee, Riegel and many others. When the next book opens, the older women drop out and new names appear. It is the same of course in each period.

The second book covers the years Dec. 12, 1912 to Feb. 14, 1918 and includes the trying days of World War I. The Aid promised to help the Red Cross, to faithfully observe rationing laws, not to pay dues or have refreshments at the meetings in order to help the war effort. In spite of strict rationing, by personal sacrifice the ladies went on serving dinners, having food sales, etc. Food sales were popular because flour and sugar were rationed and people were glad to buy—thus saving their own supply.

Still making money, the Aid was selling a new product "Peerless Stain Remover", but it never attained the popularity of the old "Stain-Off", and was soon dropped from the Record. The Ladies were still selling subscriptions, Japanese toweling, and some kind of a cloth—spelled a dozen different ways—but several times as "Danglo" cloth. No idea what it was, or how used.

Rather an unusual note—In the spring of 1913, the Aid voted to serve the Alumni Banquet for $10.00. The location was the dining room of the Brinkman Hotel and the decorations were evidently supplied by the Association—but $10.00 for a full-course banquet for 19 seniors, school board and their wives, and various and assorted members of the Association—that must have been around twenty cents a plate. The food was probably all donated and of course the women did the work gladly.

New names prominent in this period—Spickard, Daniels, Mrs. J. C. Butler, Rippey Hagenmaster, F. G. Smart, Hanback—Many of the older ladies were still active but taking a less prominent part.

The Secretary's book covering the years 1918 to 1924, is missing. But it was now that it was discovered that the church walls were defective and could not be profitably repaired, so agitation was started for a new, larger church.

The third book covers the years 1924 to 1928, and it was during this time that the present church was planned, built and dedicated. It was a period of untold hours of hard work and intense dedication for the Aid. Four presidents led the group during these crowded days—Tanner, Smart, Crawford and Harbeson. The first pledge was for $2000. By now the Aid was divided into three divisions and there was a sharp rivalry to see which could make the most money.

One job everyone helped with, was serving meals at the County Fair. A building was constructed at the Fair Grounds—a roof, sides, and partly screened. It was furnished with stoves, rough tables and benches—sort of a make-shift affair, but the ladies made it do for several years. Some of the entries that showed amounts made—1926. Total Receipts $573.30—Expenses $236.36 — Net Profit — $336.94.

By checking the records we find the eating house at the fair was operated until the fall of 1934, when the profit was only $151.82. No report was found as to whether they served in the fall of 1935, but March 14 of that year a motion was made and carried, to advertise the M. E. Building at the Fair Grounds for sale.

Another venture that paid off well was the second cook book. This was the project of the Second Division, with Mrs. Ruth Boyd

as leader, Mrs. A. E. Tanner as vice, Mrs. J. H. Falen Chairman of printing, Mrs. Harve Crawford, Chairman of the Advertising—and Mrs. W. D. Baxter, Chairman of Recipes. Still active in the church (1965) Mrs. B. E. Evans, Mrs. Frank Hawver, Miss Mary Fee and Mrs. F. D. McMillan, all of whom added their services to complete the book.

It was published in 1926—copies sold for $1.00 each. Some of the unsold copies were reduced in price and by 1934 had been sold out.

Another division started an adventure in mince-meat making. Mrs. Elizabeth Soice, using an old family recipe, was Chairman. She and Mrs. A. N. Smith, the minister's wife, worked out a recipe for 50 quarts. Elmer Dale donated a quarter of fine beef, others donated apples, which were plentiful that year—still others raisins, spices etc. All the division members donated work and glass jars and helped with the making. The first batch sold out at once at 25c a quart, and more was made. The project was carried on each fall for years, and was still being made in the fall of 1935. By then it was selling for 35 cents a quart. In the year 1933 mincemeat sales were $21.90.

Of course the Aid was still serving dinners, banquets etc., still taking subscriptions, and selling everything.

Mrs. Ida Hagenmaster and Mrs. E. Soice being master pie bakers, often spent an entire day in the church kitchen, making pies to serve at bazaars, food sales, etc.

The ladies raised the $2000 in a short time and then pledged $3000 more. A poem, evidently written by the husband of one of the members (a P. S. Ingalls) follows:

When this building was only a fancy
A mirage in the distance, it seemed,
We thought of it just as a vision,
And a Hope of which we had dreamed.
But when the plans were made for its structure
And the Cornerstone finally was laid,
There were none in the Congregation
As rejoiced as The Ladies Aid.
And we wanted to help in the project
And give you our bit with the rest,
For we know that only in giving
Can we hope to be happy and blest.
So we promised Two Thousand Dollars
On this Building, God's House — Holy — Grand,
For we want it to stand as His Monument
And the finest through out the land.
And we've toiled and planned and labored
And done the things that have been hard to do,
But the money has been forth coming,
And now we present it to you.
The rest of our pledge on the Building,
We have worked with will and with vim,
And tonight our hearts are rejoicing
For we've given it all for Him.

Members prominent in those crowded days were Mrs. Harve Crawford, Mrs. F. G. Smart, Mrs. Ida Hagenmaster, Mrs. A. E. Tanner, Mrs. Edith Harbeson, Mrs. Elizabeth Soice, Mrs. A. H. Watson, Mrs. E. Brown, Mrs. Pearl Brown, Mrs. Will Garey and many others. It is worthy of note that in training at the time

were names of those prominent in the W.S.C.S. of the present—Mabel Butler, Juanita Soice, Grace Evans, Mary Fee, Marie Sandifer, Ruth McMillan, Ruth Boyd and many others.

By May 14, 1926 the first pledge was paid, the next $3000 by Sept. 14, 1928. Then it took longer to raise the amount promised, but from Feb. 3, 1925 to June 9, 1932, the Aid paid $9043 into the building fund. Their efforts did not stop—the Ladies worked valiantly until the mortgage was paid.

The book from 1928 to 1933 cannot be found. For the next ten years it was a terrible struggle for the Great Depression had clamped down on the nation. The Aid struggled along—serving banquets, holding bazaars. As noted before, they quit serving at the Fair in 1934 because they were barely making expenses and in Feb. 1937 the Fair building was sold for $50.

But in spite of hard times, the Aid made annual contributions to the budget, to Mrs. Nanny Cook's Annuity Fund, made repairs on the parsonage, and kept the Society solvent—but it was no easy struggle.

One major project was serving the German Baptist Church State Conference. The congregation of the Baptist Church rented the M. E. Church to hold their meetings—and paid the Aid for serving meals. The members of the Baptist congregation furnished the food. Dan Meschberger and Mrs. Henry Wendelburg were in charge. Food was brought in trucks— 100 lb. sacks of potatoes and sugar, dressed chickens by the dozens, whole quarters of beef, cut and ready for roasting, and everything else in proportion. The Conference lasted from Wednesday evening dinner to Sunday evening supper. About 800 meals were prepared and served for which the Aid, was paid. According to Mrs. Henry Wendelburg this was in 1930, and although there is no record of price paid per meal—it was so low, the Baptist committee paid what they had collected for the service.

The book covering 1937 - 1940 carried on the struggle. Times were only slightly better. For the year 1937, a total of $368.92 was taken in. This represented a lot of sweat and worry. In 1938, the Aid's pledge to the budget was $500 and the Aid usually paid some other bills. The Society was optimistic to pledge $500 but it was quite certain if that was the goal—it would be reached.

The Aid served the Alumni Banquet in 1939 and cleared $53.50. And the minutes stated that all who were asked for donations gave cheerfully—and there was no complaining, so this shows times were more prosperous. At the last meeting of the M. E. Ladies' Aid as a separate organization Sept. 5, 1940, there were 37 present. The financial report for 1939—Receipts $464.65, Disbursements $457.50, leaving a balance of $7.15, and a note was made that they paid the last of the pledge to the church budget.

After long years of service the Ladies Aid bowed out. New Times — new problems — new and old faces — but the work goes on.

Brunetta Jimison, May 1965

History of Women's Foreign Missionary Society of Topeka Branch

A report was published in 1883, the year the Branch was divided and enlarged into three Branches — the Minneapolis, the

Des Moines, and the Topeka. The towns were far apart, lines of communication were few, but there was sublime faith, wide vision, and tireless zeal to match the wide open spaces, traveled by ox cart, wagon and passenger train.

The first Quarterly meeting was held in Topeka in March of 1884; the first Annual meeting was held in Salina in October with forty-one delegates present, and enough money in the treasury to meet all necessary expenses. Many new auxiliaries and 750 new members had been secured during the year. A deeply spiritual atmosphere pervaded the meeting.

In 1893, the first ten years had passed. Cash was not plentiful, and the drouth had tried the courage of the stoutest hearts, but the missionary women having done the best in their power to keep, maintain and advance their cause, learned how to stand, to leave it to God to fulfill His promise and bring to pass — Psalms 37:5.

During the so-called "Gay Nineties" there were some desperate years when the fields were as bare as a desert, and more than once the treasury was down to the last dollar, but God's promise held true and there was still a wonderful spiritual blessing at the Annual Meetings.

1900 saw a definite brightening of the skies. Several influential people raised $2500 for a Girls School in China. The Conference voted to start the United Study for everyone who would take part, and an organization for young people was formed called the Standard Bearers, then later the King's Heralds and Light Bearers for the children. During this period of 1903, some of the Stafford ladies were helping, but the records are misplaced, so to state who they were or exactly what they did is impossible.

In September of 1909, Stafford organized the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society with the following 16 charter members: Laura Akers, Lizzie Brown, Nannie Cook, Bertha Crawford, Lizzie Everhart, Pearl Larabee, Olive Magill, Lizzie McCurdy, Bertha McMillan, Nina Millholm, Anna Peacock, Olive Potter, Naoma Reigel, Nellie Roberts, Emma Spickard, and Minnie Holmes, with dues of 30c per quarter. They held many interesting meetings, and the W.S.C.S. owes them a debt of gratitude for the start of this wonderful organization.

They soon felt the need of a local organization, so organized the Aid Society, which was later called "The Woman's Home Missionary Society". They later formed an organization for working ladies; this was called the Young Ladies Missionary Society.

The Women's Foreign Missionary Society seemed to be the most active. They had different projects to raise money to help build a school in China, and on March 2, 1916 a check for $500.00 was sent to the Conference Treasurer to help build this school, in Dak Long, China; and each year money was sent to help support teachers and missionaries. This cancelled check has been retained in one of the record books, also a picture of the school hangs in the room to the east of the foyer of the Church.

In 1940 the Foreign and Home Missionary Societies were combined and became the Women's Society of Christian Service; and the Young Ladies became the Wesleyan Service Guild.

Mrs. Frank (Ina) Hawver

Young Woman's Foreign Missionary Society

The first record we have of the Y.W.M.S. shows that it met October 1st, 1928 with Ruth Evans as President.

Once a month about 35 young women met in the homes for evening meetings. The dues were $1.30, one dollar of which was sent to the Hutchinson District.

The programs consisted of devotionals, review of Chapters from Study Books and Mystery Box Questions taken from the magazine "Womans Friend".

To promote interest members were divided into two groups. Points were given for a contest. The winners were given a dinner in the spring by the losers. The contest was based on points:—subscription to the "Friend" — 5 points; new members-5 points; attendance-2 points; magazine read-3 points.

A mystery box question was given each member. They were enclosed in peanut shells, valentines, Japanese fans or under turkey wings of a Thanksgiving turkey. Mrs. Hibbs and Mrs. Unruh were inspiring senior members in the organization.

The first meeting was a picnic in the park held in September with guests, whom the society hoped would become members.

The apportionment for 1930 was $150.00 and for 1939 was $229.00. A collection was taken at each meeting, mite boxes were given out and a special program was given in the spring for a Thank Offering.

Refreshments consisted of candy, ice cream bars, pop corn balls or something similar for which no dishes were needed.

In 1931 a very interesting and inspiring meeting was given by Miss Jean McCrory a missionary from Egypt. She later died of cancer while in service there.

Quilts were made and sent to missionaries. The young women took over the sponsorship of Junior missionaires from the senior organization. These were "The Little Light Bearers", "The Kings Heralds", and the "Standard Bearers".

In about 1936 this Society and the older organization combined into "The Foreign Missionary Society". Some of the older members were classed as Extension Members who paid dues and sometimes attended the meetings.

In 1938 about 50 members met at the church where $70.00 was given the 70th Anniversary Fund, honoring Mrs. E. B. Lear and Extension Member. That same year Mrs. Elbert Weir was elected District Stewardship Secretary.

For several years the McCalls magazine was sent Alice Wilcox a missionary in China. Dr. Edna Wallace addressed the group on her experiences as a missionary in China.

At one of the meetings about 30 met in the home of Juanita Soice for an Indian Banquet. They sat on the floor and began eating with their fingers but were later given forks and spoons.

Mary Louise Boyd and Mary Ellen Martin attended a weeks church camp at Palmer Lake, Colorado.

The roster of Presidents: Ruth Evans 1928; Gladys Peacock 1931; Juanita Richardson 1933; Ruth Boyd 1934; Gladys Harrison 1935; Mabel Butler 1937; the last president was Ernestine Hayes who served until the Woman's Society of Christian Service was organized September 12, 1940.

Mrs. Benj. E. Evans, May 1965

Woman's Society of Christian Service

The Woman's Society of Christian Service was organized September 12, 1940. The pastor Rev. R. F. Morgan presided with Mrs. Grace Watson acting as temporary secretary.

The secretary read the purpose and plan of the new organization. The call for members was extended. Mrs. Bertha Crawford presided during the enrollment during which fifty-five (55) Methodist women became charter members. Mrs. Russell Hibbs, reporting for the nominating committee submitted the following names as officers: President - Gladys Peacock; Vice President Grace Evans; Corresponding Secretary-Marie Sandifer; Recording Secretary-Charlotte Jones; Treasurer-Gladys Harrison. The membeship roll was kept open until Sunday October 10th, so that others who wished to become charter members, could sign. Fifty-two (52) members were added, making a total of 107 charter members.

The first budget was $1000.00. $500.00 was pledged to the building fund. A banquet at 50c per plate netted $40.00.

Mrs. Howard Woertendyke was very active in social work. She found work for those needing it. Eleven mattresses and clothing was given to ten needy families. Vegetables and fruit were canned for the Booth Festival in Hutchinson. The Red Cross asked for articles of furniture needed to furnish rooms at the Great Bend and Pratt Army Air Bases.

Gladys Tretbar was formally installed as President January 14, 1943. A box was sent to the Mexican Mission in Lyons consisting of 100 used garments, some new material and $5.00 in cash. Mabel Butler and Gladys Peacock gave interesting reports on E. Stanley Jones lectures at the Annual Conference in Hutchinson. An exchange sale at the Brinkman Hotel netted $162.44. At the District Meeting Lola Thole was elected Treasurer and Mabel Butler, Young Women and Girls Secretary.

Grace Evans was installed as the third President January 13, 1944. A shower of fruits, vegetables and preserves was given the Wortendykes on their 29th wedding anniversary. Bishop William C. Martin attended the Mortgage Burning Day February 27, 1944. Rev. Mulvaney the District Superintendent conducted the morning service, followed by a basket dinner. Floyd Peacock, Chairman of the Official Board, presided during the afternoon program. This $66,000.00 church was dedicated May 22, 1927, seventeen years earlier. In September the WSCS met for a covered dish luncheon. 140 members were seated with their hostess at beautifully decorated quartet tables, laid with the hostesses loveliest silver and china. The Wesleyan. Service Guild was organized in October. O. B. Baugh gave Mrs. E. B. Lear a life estate in property on South Main Street in Stafford, which at her death became the property of the WSCS. The $750.00 derived from this was sent to a girls school in West China. This money was to be used for something suitable for a memorial, not for food or clothing. $25.00 was allowed Ernestine Hayes for use in attending the National Convention in Columbus, Ohio.

Ernestine Hayes, as President in 1945 conducted a beautiful memorial service honoring Mrs. Ida Hagenmaster. An original poem by Mrs. Marie Sandifer was read when she presented a Silver Tea Service as the gift of the children of Mrs. Hagenmaster. An emergency food collection was taken to relieve mass starvation in the Phillipines, also clothing made by the circles was sent to them.

Letters were sent to Russian women, telling them something of our way of life, and that we want to be friendly with them.

Mrs. Collins Thole was elected as Conference Spiritual Life Chairman.

Mrs. Lloyd Powell was installed as President in 1947. A religious survey was made. Circles met the last Thursday of the month doing supply work with a ten minute program. Gladys Harrison gave a lovely silver pitcher to add to the tea service.

The 1948 president was Jane Johnson, who with Ernestine Hayes served a Chinese luncheon at which Miss Eunice Braden taught a course on China "Twilight or Dawn." A tile floor costing $306.84 and new drapes costing $133.00 were put in the downstairs parlor. Mrs. Floyd Peacock in behalf of the Past Presidents, presented the Women's Society with a beautiful lace tablecloth.

1949 saw Marie Sandifer installed as President. Betty Corbin reported $291.00 was cleared on banquets in November. The Women's society voted not to allow the kitchen equipment to be taken from the kitchen. A policy of giving $5.00 as a memorial for a departed member was instituted. Mrs. Foster reported that 1774 plates were sold during the year with a profit of $800.00.

President Dean Schrag (1950) announced that a piano had been given by Jane Johnson in memory of her daughter, for use in the ladies parlor. Edith Baxter gave a used gas range and Mabel Butler an electric refrigerator.

Gertie Piepmeier served as President for 1952-53. Adelaide Thole reported that 1029 garments and $156.66 had been sent on various clothing appeals. Rev. and Mrs. Harold Soulen spoke at the October 4th Sunday Evening Service and showed pictures of their European Tour. $400.00 was spent on the parsonage which included a cooking stove, wall paper, light fixtures, gas logs and andirons.

Mrs. Evelyn McCandless (1954-55) was installed as President by Mrs. Olive Palmer in a very appropriate service. No records can be found for the term of Mrs. McCandless.

For the period of 1956-57 Mrs. Elma Ewy served as President. 1000 cook books compiled by a committee of Mabel Butler, Ruth Boyd and Juanita Soice were sold. Later 200 more were ordered. Mrs. Ewy initiated the practice of having the executive meeting the first Thursday of each month in the homes. Mrs. Betty Soulen of Hutchinson was the thank offering speaker. A Golden Age party for the over 70's was given, also a valentine tea and birthday tea. In April a local officers Work Shop was held with Mrs. George of St. John presiding. This was followed by a luncheon in Mrs. Ewy's home.

President Adelaide Thole (1958-59) announced that $96.00 was received in the world banks and at 32 cents per second our Womans Society can carry on work around the world for five minutes. 150 more cooks books were ordered. Total disbursements for the year 1958 was $3235.14. Guests were invited to a special meeting 29th January at which Mabel Butler told of her trip to the Holy Land. $261.47 was the profit from a chicken dinner. Elizabeth Singleton of Sylvia taught the study course on Luke. Six tables were ordered costing $142.00.

Mrs. Muriel Longwood was elected President for 1960-61. Profit from the Fall Festival and Bazaar was $639.48. Foreign students were entertained in the homes during the Thanksgiving Holidays. Spring Rummage brought in $107.00. Contract for the sanctuary

carpet was given to Gladys Peacock for $2000.00. This was $12.50 per yard. Mabel Butler's Circle gave two flags for the sanctuary. The church was filled when the District Meeting was held March 23rd. Luncheons were served by the different churches at $1 per plate. During Holy Week Dr. Roy Smith held evening services in the High School. Different churches served breakfast from 6:50 to 7:50 in the Presbyterian Church each morning. Dr. Smith gave inspiring talks at these breakfasts. Elizabeth Singleton presented the Thank Offering Service. $103.38 was given for missionary work. A gift of $30 from Harold Jenkins was for a pulpit light. W.S.C.S. spent $357.54 on the parsonage.

Mrs. Lucile Tucker was installed as President June 14, 1962 and also served in 1963. Used commemorative stamps were collected. Each stamp represents 15 cups of milk for needy children. Rev. Choate announced the Evangelistic Missions for week of November 4th, with Rev. Pagura from Argentine as the evangelist. Mrs. Ina Hawver presented a communion service to be used at the hospital and for shut ins. W.S.C.S. gave $800.00 toward the installation of a Public Address system. 108 books "Women of the Bible" were ordered. World Bank collection was $156.69 which means that our local Society supported the total Womans Missionary Program around the world of 7 minutes and 42 seconds. Missionary Pledge to the Hutchinson District was $1575.00. Gladys Tretbar submitted a plan for new ovens, cook tops, coffee bar and a new refrigerator, the cost being about $1659.00.

Mrs. Mabel Butler, President for 1964-65 presided at the September meeting. The society voted to use the $500.00 given by Mrs. Albert Byer in the name of her daughter, Hattie, for the remodeling of the church office. The bazaar proceeds in October were almost $600.00. About 125 ladies of the community, Sylvia and Eureka attended a special Christmas Program in December. Fruit baskets were given the Golden Ages at Christmas. W.S.C.S. and W.S.G. met on Sunday January 17th. Mrs. Burton Black of Wichita lectured on "Crosses". She told of the significance of the 100 crosses displayed. Miss Hazel Fee collected library books and recorded them, to be kept in the new shelves in the 50-50 room. Adelaide Thole is a District Officer, "Membership Cultivation in the District."

Dated May 1, 1965. Mrs. Benj E. Evans

Community Revivals

The Stafford Methodist Episcopal Church has always been one of the foremost in any move for co-operative effort, for the purpose of bettering the religious life of the community.

Ever since its beginning as the oldest church in town, it has been a leader. Through the years, many movements have sponsored this friendliness among Stafford Churches. For many years the churches worshipped together on Sunday evenings in the City Park. Holy Week has become a regular habit. Services being held in first one then another of the churches, whose pastors and congregations decided to co-operate. Each year in the fall all or nearly all unite in the World Day of Prayer. This service is rotated among the churches.

And then there is the Ministerial Association which brings the pastors of the various churches together. Here they talk over problems, and make certain decisions. But of primary important they learn to know and respect their brother pastors.

This association has been the prime boosting force of the city-

wide union evangelistic meetings. Since the beginning of the century there have been many of these great revivals.

The first of these was the French E. Oliver Revival which began Jan. 24, 1905. A tabernacle 60' x 90' was constructed on West Broadway where the City Office was formerly located. It seated over 800 and was heated by big old coal burning stoves. As I remember it, straw was placed on the ground to reduce the chill from the ground for it was a very cold winter.

French E. Oliver, a Baptist, was a well known evangelist of the time. He had conducted meetings over most of the United States. Word had come from Kansas towns where he had worked of his great ability. At Marion, Kansas, 500 had been converted, and in North Topeka over 500. The ministers of the town talked it over and decided to put the question of a community revival up to their congregations, and the decision was unanimous.

The following congregations and their ministers agreed to begin preparation for the city wide revival:

United Presbyterian — Rev. Elliott
Baptist — James Harvey
Methodist — E. N. Cunningham
Christian — G. W. Alford
Congregational — Mrs. Lydia Mayos

If there were other churches in the town at that time they did not choose to join in the campaign.

French E. Oliver was an especially attractive young man probably in his late 30's—and a dynamic speaker. Not a "Fear of hell" speaker—rather calm with no gestures, but a compelling personality. His song director was an able man by the name of Jones—always spoken of as Prof. Jones.

During the first week there were about seventy conversions. Then Rev. Oliver was called home by the illness of his wife—but he promised to return later, and he did.

But in the meantime an event took place that shocked the town—the fire that wiped out the block south of Broadway on East Main. The Farmers National Bank and all the other buildings were destroyed. It was one of the coldest nights of the year, and there was no fire department—and of course at that time no city water.

The town was stunned but the churches had promised to keep the tabernacle intact and hold union services Sunday morning and night, pastors alternating to handle the services. This they did until Rev. Oliver returned February 28.

The next big union evangelistic meetings were planned by the following churches in the fall of Oct. 1920.

Baptist — W. R. Briggs
Christian — E. G. Anderson
Friends — Carl Cox
Methodist — Guy E. Spear
Reformed Presbyterian — J. G. Reed

By this time the Congregational Church in Stafford had disbanded.

For weeks before, the congregations held prayer meetings and made extensive preparations. A tabernacle was erected on South Main—just south of where the Giles Service Station now stands. A big advertisement in The Courier of October announced the "Go

to Church Sunday" and there was later publicity with a picture of James Rayburn who was to be the evangelist, and his music directors Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Wickland.

The tabernacle was built and the first service was held Nov. 7, 1920. Almost from the first there was intense interest and the crowds were big. Cottage prayer meetings, talks at the high school etc. produced the proper emotional climate. Meetings were held at 7:30 each evening except Monday—Bible Study at 2:30 p.m., cottage prayer meetings 10:00 to 10:30 a.m. were held the second week. The last two weeks special services were held for men at 10:30 a.m., 2:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. so no man had an excuse for not attending at least one of these services.

Rev. Rayburn promised a different type of preaching—a down to-earth variety—and he certainly delivered. He and Mr. and Mrs. Wickland were great favorites in Stafford, and the tabernacle was filled to capacity every night. They used as their slogan or motto —Hebrew second chapter, first verse and asked the converts and other Christians to use the verse as a sort of guide line for daily living.

The crusade was a great success as there were 450 converts. Each person was to choose the church he wished to become a member of. Shortly after the revival ended 156 members were added to the Methodist Church roll. Others came in later.

But the big result was the sense of unity and good-will that the meetings developed in the town. Rev. Rayburn stressed this and put aside the old bias that had grown up among the Protestant congregations. He preached brotherhood in a wide sense.

The effect of the Rayburn meetings was so great that three years later, in the fall of 1923 another crusade was planned E. M. Pratt was to be the evangelist, and Ed L. Crain of Denver and Chester R. Guthrie were to be in charge of the music. Mr. Crain was a splendid soloist and added much to the interest of the revival.

The publicity was not quite as extensive as for the Rayburn meetings, but still there was much interest in the community. A tabernacle was built on the same spot as the 1920 one—and of much the same construction.

The revival started Sunday Nov. 18 and ran four weeks. But the weather was bad. Roads at that time were in bad shape—little paved or even graveled. So there was not as many from the rural sections as had been expected; yet the crowds were big and enthusiastic and 120 converts were added to the churches of the town.

Perhaps the big boost came to those Christians in the town—especially those who had entered the churches in 1920. At least there was a good feeling of comradeship fostered in the town and the religious spirit in all the churches was definitely improved.

One thousand dollars was raised to pay the expenses—the tabernacle was torn down and the lumber sold. On the last Sunday, a collection was taken for the evangelist and his helpers and over $1,000 was raised in a few minutes.

Early in 1961 the Ministerial Association began to make plans for the Community Holy Week Services. It was suggested that an outside minister be selected to give the sermons. The congregations of the various churches agreed.

Roy L. Smith a Kansas man who had spent his early years in Nickerson and had graduated from high school there was contacted and agreed to come.

The Reverend Smith had wide experience in many fields. Not only was he an outstanding clergyman of the Methodist Church but he had success in many other lines of work. A great scholar and author of religious books and essays, he was also well known as an editor and world wide traveler. He used many of his pictures during his Crusade here.

Assisting in this Crusade for Christ was a well known singer Bernard Vessey of Colorado Springs. Vessey had wide experience in conducting the music for the services and was a great favorite with the audience.

The Crusade date was March 26-31 with all the local churches, minus one, assisting in necessary arrangements. Local ministers took charge during each service.

The meetings met in the high school auditorium and the attendance was excellent. At the opening meeting there were 500 present.

Round the clock prayer meetings had preceded the Crusade, and engendered an emotional atmosphere that added much to the success of the Holy Week Service. Perhaps the greatest good was to the congregations of the various churches—a revival of the Christian spirit and brotherhood of man.

During the meetings the first Community Breakfast was held at the United Presbyterian Church. About 100 attended and the service was so inspiring it was decided to continue them after the crusade was over. Each church was to be responsible. At the present, almost five years later, they are still being held, but this winter 1965 only bi-monthly.

About two years later Roy L. Smith died and his body was brought back to Nickerson for burial. Many from Stafford attended this service.